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C.I.A. Should Give Just The Facts

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) charged in a speech this week that the head of the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency changed his estimates of Russian missile strength by 95 per cent over a two-year period.

Sen. Kenneth Keating (R-N.Y.) and President Kennedy violently disagree on the amount of Soviet power in Cuba. Yet both get their information from the same source: The Central Intelligence Agency.

Something is wrong when the C.I.A. misses its estimates of foreign countries this much. And whatever is wrong had better be corrected — for American foreign policy is based on intelligence reports.

One critic says that the C.I.A. is becoming political. It returns the kind of report the administration in power desires.

An agency that is depended upon to

provide the information on which national policy will be based is worthless if it does not operate objectively, letting the chips fall where they may. In short, if the President (this one, previous ones or future ones) say that X country has no missiles and the C.I.A. finds that X country has missiles, it must report the facts — not something designed to make the President look right.

A factual, independent appraisal of foreign countries is basic to a sensible national policy.